

In the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A gaming system including a system controller, ~~a credit establishment facility,~~ a plurality of gaming machines, and a communications system connecting each of the plurality of gaming machines to the system controller, and a player identification device having an associated player credit,

each of the gaming machines ~~[[each]]~~ having

(1) a credit recording facility,

(2) a player input device,

(3) a player identification ~~tracking~~ input device responsive to a player identification device; and

(4) a game controller, ~~each game controller being arranged~~ to play a game when a player has established a credit in the credit recording facility of the respective gaming machine,

wherein the ~~credit establishment facility is arranged to establish a player credit and to associate that credit with a player tracking means of a player establishing the credit, and while a player is playing a game on a machine selected by the player from the plurality of gaming machines the credit is held in the credit recording facility of the selected gaming machine, each gaming machine being responsive to the presence of a~~ is locked to prevent play of the gaming machine by any player, via player action solely when player credit held in the credit recording facility of the respective machine is non-zero, to lock the machine preventing play by any player unless and unlocked when the machine is supplied via the ~~tracking~~ identification input device, with the player ~~tracking means~~ identification device associated with the credit held in the credit recording facility of the respective gaming machine.

2. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the gaming machines connected to the system includes a reservation button which when pressed while the player tracking ~~means~~ device is present causes the machine to lock and prevent further play in the absence of the respective player tracking ~~means~~ device.

3. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in claim 2, wherein the reservation button, when pressed while the player tracking ~~means~~ device is present, causes the machine to lock only when the player's credit is non-zero.

4. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in claim 1 wherein ~~the each gaming machines~~ machine connected to the system ~~include~~ includes a timeout ~~function~~ device such that when the machine is locked for more than a predetermined time any credit held in the credit recording facility of the machine is transferred to the gaming system controller and held there for the player and the machine is unlocked to allow another player to establish a credit in the credit recording facility of the machine and to commence play.

5. (Cancelled).

6. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in claim 1 wherein the player credit established by the credit establishment facility and associated with a player tracking means of a player establishing the credit is held in the system controller.

7. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in claim 6, wherein ~~the each gaming machines~~ machine connected to the system ~~include~~ includes a credit importing facility such that when a player tracking ~~means~~ device is supplied to a gaming machine that is not currently holding a player credit in its credit recording facility and is unlocked, the gaming machine will signal the system controller to transfer the players credit of the player supplying the player tracking ~~means~~ device to the credit recording facility of the respective gaming machine.

8. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in claim 7, wherein the player credit held in the system controller is transferred to the credit recording facility of the machine selected by the player when the player inserts the associated player tracking means device into the tracking input device of the selected machine.

9. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the player tracking means device is a token.

10. (Original) The system as claimed in claim 9, wherein the token is a magnetic stripe card.

11. (Original) The system as claimed in claim 9, wherein the token is a smart card.

12. (Previously Amended) The system as claimed in claim 9, wherein the token is issued by the gaming establishment as an in-house identification mechanism.

13. (Previously Amended) The system as claimed in claim 9, wherein the token is a financial transaction card issued by a remote financial institution.

14. (Original) The system as claimed in claim 9, wherein the token is a ticket printed by the gaming establishment operating the system and readable by a bill acceptor mounted within the gaming machine.

15. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 8, wherein tracking input device is a bio-sensor input device and the player tracking means device is a physical attribute of the player.

16. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in claim 15, wherein the tracking input device is a fingerprint reader and the player tracking means device is a fingerprint of the player.

17. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in claim 15, wherein the tracking input device is an iris scanner and the player tracking means device is an eye of the player.

18. (Currently Amended) A gaming machine ~~connected~~ for connection to a gaming system wherein the gaming system comprises a system controller, ~~a credit establishment facility, a plurality of said gaming machines,~~ and a communications system connecting the gaming machine ~~each of the plurality of gaming machines~~ to the system controller, the gaming machine ~~having comprising~~

(1) a credit recording facility,

(2) a player input device responsive to a player tracking device,

(3) a tracking input device, and

(4) a game controller, ~~the game controller being~~ arranged to play a game when a player has established a credit in the credit recording facility of the gaming machine,

wherein the gaming machine being characterized in that the credit establishment facility is arranged to establish a player credit and to associate that credit with a player tracking means of a player establishing the credit, and while a player is playing a game on the gaming

machine the credit is held in the credit recording facility of the gaming machine, and the gaming machine being responsive to the presence of a is locked to prevent play of the gaming machine by any player, via player action solely at a time when player credit held in the credit recording facility of the gaming machine in non-zero, to lock the gaming machine preventing play by any player unless and locked when a player tracking means device is afterward supplied to the machine via the tracking input device, ~~whereby the machine~~ which identifies the player tracking means device as being associated with the credit held in the credit recording facility of the gaming machine.

19. (Currently Amended) The gaming machine as claimed in claim 18, which includes a reservation button which when pressed while the player tracking means device is present causes the machine to lock and prevent further play in the absence of the respective player tracking means.

20. (Currently Amended) The gaming machine as claimed in claim 19, wherein the reservation button, when pressed while the player tracking means device is present, causes the machine to lock only when the players credit is non-zero.

21. (Cancelled).

22. (Currently Amended) The gaming machine as claimed in claim 18 wherein the player credit established by the credit establishment facility and associated with a player tracking means device of a player establishing the credit is held in the system controller.

23. (Currently Amended) The gaming machine as claimed in claim 22, includes a credit importing facility such that when a player tracking means device is supplied to a gaming machine that is not currently holding a player credit in its credit recording facility and is unlocked, the gaming machine will signal the system controller to transfer the players credit of the player supplying the player tracking means device to the credit recording facility of the respective gaming machine.

24. (Currently Amended) The gaming machine as claimed in claim 23, wherein the player credit held in the system controller is transferred to the credit recording facility of the machine selected by the player when the player inserts the associated player tracking means device into the tracking input device of the selected machine.

25. (Currently Amended) The gaming machine as claimed in claim 18 wherein the player tracking means device is a token.

26. (Original) The gaming machine as claimed in claim 25, wherein the token is a magnetic stripe card.

27. (Original) The gaming machine as claimed in claim 25, wherein the token is a smart card.

28. (Original) The gaming machine as claimed in claim 25, wherein token is issued by the gaming establishment as an in-house identification mechanism.

29. (Original) The gaming machine as claimed in claim 25, wherein token is a financial transaction card issued by a remote financial institution.

30. (Original) The gaming machine as claimed in claim 25, wherein the token is a ticket printed by the gaming establishment operating the gaming machine and readable by a bill acceptor mounted within the gaming machine.

31. (Currently Amended) The gaming machine as claimed in claim 18, wherein tracking input device is a bio-sensor input device and the player tracking means is a physical attribute of the player.

32. (Currently Amended) The gaming machine as claimed in claim 31, wherein the tracking input device is a fingerprint reader and the player tracking means device is a fingerprint of the player.

33. (Currently Amended) The gaming machine as claimed in claim 31, wherein the tracking input device is an iris scanner and the player tracking means device is an eye of the player.

Claims 34 – 43 (Cancelled).